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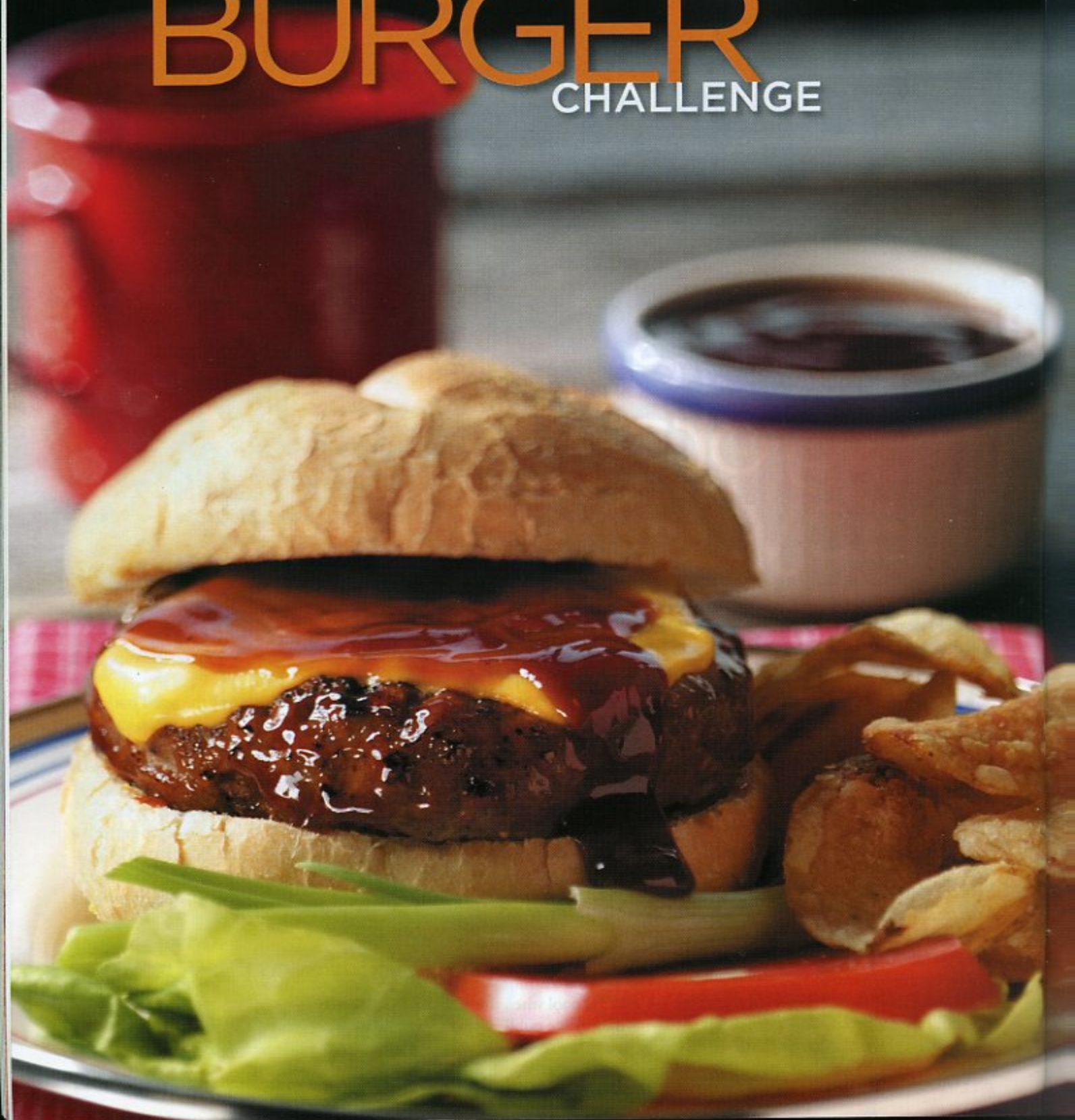
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THE WORLD'S

BEST BURGER

Wait 'til you sink your teeth into these winning reader recipes. You'll agree they're something special.

CHALLENGE





Burger contest winner Rhoda Troyer with husband Dwight and daughter Jacquelyn.

When we called Rhoda Troyer of Glenford, Ohio to let her know her Barbecued Burgers were selected the “best burger in the world” in our recent contest, she was speechless for a few moments.

“I can’t believe it,” Rhoda said. “We just had some friends over last night and made these burgers...they said they’re really terrific.”

That’s being modest. Rhoda’s Barbecued Burgers (pictured at far left) are so tasty and juicy, you’ll have to eat them with a napkin in one hand. The sweet barbecue sauce is bound to drip down your chin.

For her winning recipe, selected from more than 500 separate entries, Rhoda received a top-of-the-line stainless steel gas grill. Five other runner-up recipes are also showcased below and on the next two pages. These finalists each received a case of *Taste of Home’s* Country Grillin’ Barbecue Sauce.



Barbecued Burgers (pictured at left)

I can’t take all the credit for these winning burgers. My husband’s uncle passed down the special barbecue sauce recipe. We love it on everything...it was only natural to try it on, and in, burgers.
— Rhoda Troyer, Glenford, Ohio

SAUCE:

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 2 teaspoons prepared mustard
- 1-1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon Liquid Smoke
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

BURGERS:

- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/3 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1/4 teaspoon onion salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 pounds ground beef
- 6 hamburger buns, split
- Toppings of your choice

In a small saucepan, combine the first 10 ingredients. Bring to a boil. Remove from the heat. Set aside 1 cup barbecue sauce to serve with burgers.

In a bowl, combine the egg, oats, 1/4 cup of the remaining barbecue sauce, onion salt, garlic salt, pepper and salt. Crumble beef over mixture; mix well. Shape into six patties. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 6-8 minutes on each side or until a meat thermometer reads 160°, basting with 1/2 cup barbecue sauce during the last 5 minutes. Serve on buns with toppings of your choice and reserved barbecue sauce. **Yield:** 6 servings.

Pesto-Mozzarella Turkey Burgers (below)

Here’s a great way to eat lighter without giving up flavor. These turkey burgers are stuffed with a tasty pesto sauce that spices up our barbecues. — Jacqueline Marie Morris, Bentonville, Arkansas

- 1-1/2 pounds ground turkey
- 1 tablespoon steak sauce
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1-1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 5 tablespoons prepared pesto sauce
- 8 slices marble rye bread or 4 Italian rolls, split
- Lettuce leaves

In a bowl, combine the turkey, steak sauce, garlic, salt and pepper; mix well. Shape into eight thin oval patties. Combine mozzarella and pesto. Spoon about 1/4 cup in the center of four patties. Top with remaining patties; press edges firmly to seal. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 5 minutes on each side or until a meat thermometer reads 165°. Serve on bread with lettuce. **Yield:** 4 servings.





RP PHOTOS

Pizza Burgers (pictured above)

Kids usually love anything with the word "pizza" attached to it, so I came up with this top-your-own pizza burger recipe. It adds variety to "pizza night" at our house and even goes over well with us "big kids."

— Robin Kornegay, Seffner, Florida

- 1 package (11-1/4 ounces) frozen Texas toast slices
- 1-3/4 pounds ground beef
- 1 cup pizza sauce, divided
- 18 slices pepperoni
- 12 slices mozzarella cheese, divided
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Sliced green pepper, ripe olives and grated Parmesan cheese

Prepare six Texas toast slices according to package directions. Save remaining Texas toast for another use. Meanwhile, shape beef into 12 thin patties. Top six patties with 1 tablespoon pizza sauce, three slices of pepperoni, and one slice mozzarella cheese. Top with remaining patties; press edges firmly to seal.

Grill, covered, over medium heat for 8 minutes on each side or until a meat thermometer reads 160°. Meanwhile, in a skillet, sauté mushrooms in butter. Top each burger with a rounded tablespoonful of pizza sauce and one cheese slice. Cover; cook 3 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Top Texas toast with green pepper, burgers, mushrooms, olives and Parmesan. **Yield:** 6 servings.

Stuffed Burgers on Portabellas

Here's a low-carb treat that allows my husband and me to still enjoy burgers without compromising any of the taste. It's actually a combination of many recipes pulled together into one...and no one misses the bun. — Debbie Driggers, Greenville, Texas

- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1-1/3 pounds ground beef
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 5 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- 4 portabella mushroom caps (about 4-inch diameter)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 lettuce leaves
- 4 tomato slices

In a bowl, combine the first three ingredients. Crumble beef over mixture; mix well. Shape into eight thin patties. Combine cheese and bacon. Spoon into center of four patties. Top with remaining patties; press edges firmly to seal. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 6 minutes on each side or until a meat thermometer reads 160°.

Meanwhile, remove mushroom stems if necessary; brush with oil. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 3-4 minutes on each side or until tender. Place mushrooms, rounded side down, on serving plates. Top each with a burger, lettuce and tomato. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Hickory-Smoked Cheeseburgers

Every time I make this recipe, my guests compliment me on how great the burgers taste. The secret is a little bit of Liquid Smoke and a few sprinkles of seasonings.

— Michelle Miller, Abbeville, South Carolina

- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons Liquid Smoke
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup crushed saltines (about 15 crackers)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 1/2 teaspoon seasoning blend
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 3 pounds ground beef
- 12 slices process American cheese
- 12 sesame seed hamburger buns, split
- Mayonnaise, lettuce leaves, tomato slices, pickle slices

In a large bowl, combine the first eight ingredients. Crumble beef over mixture; mix well. Shape into 12 patties. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 5 minutes on each side or until a meat thermometer reads 160°. Top each burger with a cheese slice.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

While testing the hamburgers for our contest, our taste panel found all-beef hamburgers made from 85 percent lean ground beef produced the most flavorful, juicy burgers that shrunk little during grilling. For burgers with a high-fat added ingredient, like the sausage in the Southwestern Burgers (below), leaner 95 percent ground beef produced the best burger. Using lean beef (85 percent or leaner) also reduces grill flare-ups and blackened burgers.

Grill 1-2 minutes longer or until the cheese begins to melt. Serve on buns with mayonnaise, lettuce, tomato and pickles. **Yield:** 12 servings.

Editor's Note: This recipe was tested with Morton's Nature's Seasons Seasoning Blend.

Southwestern Burgers (pictured below)

We love burgers and have them every Saturday in summer. We also have a favorite burrito recipe. One day, we got the bright idea to combine two of our favorite recipes. Voila! Our Southwestern Burgers were created. — Tammy Fortney, Deer Park, Washington

- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chilies
- 4 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper
- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- $\frac{3}{4}$ pound bulk pork sausage
- 8 slices Monterey Jack cheese
- 8 hamburger buns, split, toasted
- 8 lettuce leaves
- 1 large tomato, sliced
- 1 to 2 ripe avocados, peeled and sliced
- Mayonnaise or mustard, optional

In a large bowl, combine the first six ingredients. Crumble beef and sausage over mixture; mix well. Shape into eight patties. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 5 minutes on each side or until a meat thermometer reads 160°. Top each burger with a cheese slice. Grill 1-2 minutes longer or until the cheese begins to melt. Serve on buns with lettuce, tomato, avocado and mayonnaise if desired. **Yield:** 8 servings. ■

